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# 'WO SERMONS

BY THE LATE

EV. JAMES HOYLE

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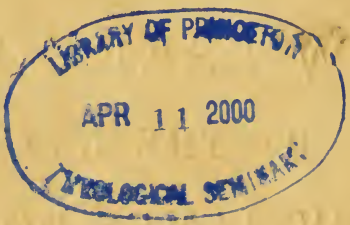
Hoyle, James.
Two sermons



These two sermons, preached on the last Sabbath mornings of my father's earthly ministry, are published in response to the expressed wish of many friends. Still I feel that some apology for their appearance is necessary.

In preparing them for the press I have felt very strongly how inadequate the printed sermon is to convey the impression produced by the spoken words of the preacher; particularly is this the case with the discourses of my father, for in their manuscript form they partake rather of the nature of notes than of complete sermons, and in many instances a word or two is all that is left in the place of a great deal that it is now impossible to reproduce.

Still with all its imperfections I put this small memento into the hands of the publisher with every confidence, for I know there are many here and across the water who will value it for the sake of him whom they knew and loved on earth, whom they know to be now enjoying that perfect rest and that crown of glory which are the portion and reward of every good and faithful servant of the Master he so devotedly served.

J. JOHNSON HOYLE.

"Lydbrook House,"
Cape Town, July 10th, 1884.

## I. REST.

"Rest in the Lord." Psalm xxxvii. 7.

You may take this verse as an instance of the rule that God does nothing by halves. In this priceless Psalm the Lord, in the first verse, finds His servant disposed to fretfulness and envy and exhorts him to cease therefrom; in the third verse He teaches him to trust; in verse four leads him on to delight; in verses five and six conducts him into a peaceful committing of his way unto God, and He does not stay until He has perfected that which concerns him and brought him up to the elevated point of our text —"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." God not only removes our ills but also confers on us unspeakable good; not only does He take away the disfiguring wound but imparts comeliness and beauty. He abounds towards us in all wisdom and prudence, lifts us from the depths of the troubled sea, and gives us assurance and rest.

Rest is a blessing which properly belongs to the child of God; it is his spiritual birthright. The idea glimmers, like some distant nebula, through every page of the Holy Scriptures. You see it in the ordinance of the Sabbath; in the law relating to the tilling of the soil, which provided that the land was to lie fallow, to rest, every seventh year; the year of Jubilee too was a time of peculiar and emphatic rest; the idea was symbolised in the Conquest of Canaan. Then as if to show us even

still more clearly how this idea of rest enters into the Divine plan of human life, God is spoken of as resting; it is of course inconceivable that He should actually be fatigued, it were profanity to suppose that He who "fainteth not, neither is weary," of whose understanding there is no searching, can ever be in a condition to render rest needful, and yet when He had finished all the work from His hands in the six days' creation we are told "He rested on the seventh day" and "sanctified it." There is then a rest of God, and "there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God"; it is of this rest, not in its highest development in heaven but in its present enjoyment, that we are about to speak this morning,—this rest in the Lord.

I. We will consider for a few minutes *what this rest is*. It is a rest of mind, an equipoise of feeling, a harmony of the inner with the outer life, the peace of desire, the repose of the consciousness of truth.

(1.) Perhaps the most prominent ingredient in this rest is a *sense of security and fixedness*,—a settled belief in the teachings of the Divine Spirit in the Gospel we have received, a sense of having grasped the blessings which that Gospel holds out to us, and therefore a sense of our acceptance with God and of our eternal security in Christ Jesus. This hallowed state of mind cannot exist in the man who is always in a state of unsettled doubt, who changes his creed almost every day of his life; the sacred dove-like spirit quits the regions of uncertainty and dwells with those who know whom they have believed. There is no real rest till you are sure; a little "if" is like a small stone in one's shoe, which soon blisters the foot and

prevents anything like restful progress. "We which have believed do enter into rest." "My presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest." He only truly rests who turns from the false and changing, the troubled and vexed, from all the arguments and controversies, the schisms and cavils, the perpetual questionings, the rush and the discord of the Church and the world, to the haven of that one grand stillness,—the Lord.

(2.) But this rest is in another aspect *contentment*, perfect satisfaction with our earthly lot. That life is a great mystery is a truism. Many things come to us in strange garbs; we often feel how difficult, how well-nigh impossible, it is to see the reason for many experiences we are called to pass through, and in our innermost hearts we say, "Is this right?" "Can this be a tender Father?" "Can this be love, infinite, unerring love?" And so the murmuring spirit finds its way to the throne of the heart. Better would it be for us could we live so high above the events of life that from our higher atmosphere we could look down and say, "None of these things move me." Remember too, that though God is revealed, His providences are not revealed; in this respect it is easier to read the invisible than the visible, we can read God when we cannot read His doings. He is a God that hideth Himself. His path is in the great waters. His footsteps are not known. But He is our own precious God, working in His own way, in His own time, His own purposes of love. The contented spirit leaves all to him and tarries his leisure,—it rests in the Lord.

(3.) Then this rest consists in *submission*. The text

according to the Hebrew is "Be silent to the Lord"; one of the old versions has it "Hold thou still before God." This is illustrated by what we read of Aaron; when his sons died before the Lord, Aaron held his peace. In like manner let your tongue be quiet; do not murmur, do not argue, be quite still, leave all to God and bow in silence. "My soul," said David, "is even as a weaned child"; he no longer cried for the warm breasts of comfort; the Lord's will was his will. It had been a sharp lesson, but he had learnt it at last; once he had struggled, now he acquiesced; once he had resisted, now he sweetly yielded. "Let it be as Thou pleasest, Thy will is mine,"—*that* is rest.

There is a holier, sweeter rest
Than the lulling rest from pain,
And a deeper calm than that which sleep
Sheds over heart and brain.
It is the soul's surrendered choice,
The settling of the will,
Lying down gently at the cross
God's purpose to fulfil.

(4.) Then there is in this rest a *patient waiting*. "Rest in the Lord," says the text, "wait patiently for Him." That is, whilst you have and must have desires, feel that you can waive them and wait the Lord's time; whilst you have and must have wishes, keep them tethered; whilst you have a will, keep it in subservience to a wiser and kinder will that rules above. God never sent you yet upon a sea of tribulation without bringing you safe home again; He never sent you to battle at your own charges; He never bade you work without giving you the needed strength;

He never called you to suffer without sustaining you under the pain. Oh ! it is a blessed thing to be quite confident that God cannot err, cannot forsake, cannot cease to love, and that everything that comes from Him comes at the right time, in the right way and in the right measure,—that all is well and will end well. Yes, though all the tempests should come forth from their caverns to howl at once across the angry sea, though every hurricane and cyclone that ever blew should come back again and swell the storm so that one's whole life is apparently wrecked by reason of its relentless fury, all is well; wait God's time, and if only on a plank or broken spar you will come safe to land. Rest in the Lord.

(5.) There is just one other feature of this rest that we may allude to before we pass on, and that is *expectation* especially with regard to the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. The greatest fret that some of us ever have is about the cause of God ; personal and domestic troubles sit very lightly on some of us, but Church troubles perplex us and harass us greatly. For my own part I would fain believe that none of you ever intentionally cause me distress of mind, but there are some of you who grieve and trouble me, for you seem little if any bettered by what you hear, and resolutely refuse to give yourselves to Christ. Many of you, too, lack the enthusiam, the steadfast earnest continuance in the work of Christ and in the attendance on the means of grace which in my judgment is so necessary to make a truly prosperous and powerful Church. And if one looks outside the Church one sees everywhere dark clouds looming ominously. There is a great deal of loose-

ness and disjointedness ; many of the old landmarks have been pulled up, the hedges broken down. The old saying is still true :—" They break down the carved work . . . with axes and hammers ; they have cast fire into Thy sanctuary ; they have defiled by casting down the dwelling-place of Thy name to the ground." Still even in these things we are to rest in the Lord. " Go thy way," says He, " till the end be ; for thou shall rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." Christ will take care of His own ; against them the gates of hell shall not prevail, and we may therefore rest in the Lord with the certain expectation that He will overrule the evil and will Himself surely come to end it all and " reign amongst His ancients gloriously."

II. We shall approach this subject more closely if we consider *where this rest is to be found.*

(1.) You will observe at the outset that it is rest *in the Lord Himself.* Try, dear friends, for once to grasp this truth, that the soul's rest is in God,—in God only. The idea of God is too much associated with times and seasons, too little connected with our daily life and our hourly feelings, to retain that brightness which it once possessed. Our theories about God's essence (of which we can know nothing), our parcelling His nature out into attributes, have been fatal to vital faith. God has ceased to be to us the intensely personal Being He was to the Jews of old ; He has degenerated into a force, a law, an assemblage of attributes. From all mere philosophizing about God let us pray to be delivered, for it removes Him from us, it prevents our feeling His presence. What God essentially is we never shall know in this world, what He is

pleased to become towards us is all we require to know. This glorious Old Testament, with an anthropomorphism in which I delight, is nowhere afraid to speak of God as a Person ; it is as a Person that He has been pleased to reveal Himself to us, and hence human relationships and affections furnish the standard which should regulate our feelings towards God. This fact I have tried for years to exhibit and enforce ; God is as completely a person as the mother to whose warm breast we were pressed in our infant days. I believe there are thousands of men in this world to-day who will only be led to a better life by seeing God in human form. When duty is to be done God stands before me like some stern and severe father whose tasks must be fulfilled ; when my heart bleeds and my soul faints in sorrow He is gentle and loving, the tender Shepherd who "gathers the lambs with His arm, and carries them in His bosom, and gently leads those that are with young." Rest in the Lord ; He is "thy shield and thy exceeding great reward," thy rock, thy fortress, thy dwelling-place, thy shepherd, thy preserver ; but best of all He is thy Father, and as surely as a child may trust a parent and rest securely in his love, so surely and safely may we trust our Father and rest in Him.

(2.) Rest is found in *trust*, the belief that there is order where we see only confusion, justice where there appears to us to be inequality, symmetry and beauty where we see only deformity and ugliness. This is not impossible ; all Nature supplies analogies that justify us in asserting that for the present we are in no condition to understand the works of God as a whole. We are so small a part of

this great world, so placed within the great whole, that we can never see more than a portion at a time. The orange appears to the child smooth, but the microscope reveals on its surface peaks of relatively more than Alpine height ; the circle may be so mighty that to the observer on its circumference the portion visible on either side appears to be a right line, just as to us dwellers on this globe its surface appears a plane, and it is only from the distant heavens that the perfection of its curvature can be seen. Go close to the works of some of our great painters and see what a chaotic assemblage of colours they appear ; then retire to a proper distance, contemplate them thence and see the perfection that is evolved out of apparent chaos. Life has its points of view as well as art ; God, the great painter, contemplates His pictures from His own standpoint not from ours, and He requires from us that we should work on, carry out His great design, and wait resting in Him.

The feeling that makes us believe that the artist is right before we have proved him so, that makes us content till we have found his point of view, is just the feeling we all want in religion. The mason chipping away in the corner at his particular stone or giving the last touches to the hewn block is troubled with no restless desire to see the plan of the building ; sufficient for him that there is a plan, that there is an architect by whom it is drawn. For the finishing of the work, for the perfection of his particular stone, he himself is answerable, and for nothing more ; its place in the building will be determined by the master by whom his work was assigned. Were we

thorough believers in God, were we men of true faith, it were as easy for us to work on hopefully in the midst of apparent confusion as for the mason to toil on at his little corner of the building, regardless of the disorder and noise around him.

Talk of working by faith as impossible ! Why there is, as you know, a kind of tapestry the very condition of which is working in the dark ; the workman stands at the back and works on the underside ; he works without even asking to see. Why cannot we do the same in our lives ? "Christ," the Apostle tells us, is "the Captain of our salvation" ; how much does the private soldier on entering the battle field know beyond this, that he goes there to fight ? What general ever thinks of showing to a soldier the plan of campaign ? That is the general's business, to fight is the soldier's work. God is the great architect who plans the building, assigns us our different corners to work in, and Himself places the keystone when the edifice is reared. God is the designer of the tapestry who stands as it were on the right side, and out of our stitches made in the dark calls a beautiful pattern forth. God is the general under whose banner we enlist, who will arrange the plan of battle and secure victory on our side so we fight bravely where He appoints.

(3.) To rest in the Lord is *to feel Him always near*, to say with David, "Thou hast beset me behind and before and laid Thine hand upon me." We are told of the "mesmeric eye" that is to effect a reformation in morals, and asked how we shall feel when we know that a friend at a distance is watching all we do. The idea is foolish.

Will you get men to quail at the human eye when they fear not the Divine eye, the eye that never sleeps? No, the old doctrine is the vital one and must have fresh life infused into it. It is in the power of each one of us to make the thought of God as real to us as is the mother's face seen by the child on waking from a troubled slumber; there is the mother so all must be well, the head drops upon the pillow and the little one sinks calmly to rest. We can fancy how those French soldiers of Napoleon slept knowing that their general would visit them sleeping and watch them as they slumbered. To believe in God as the infant believes in the mother, as the soldier believes in the general,—this is the secret of resting in the Lord.

(4.) The last and surest way of finding rest in the Lord is to seek to rest in Him *through Christ*. Every day I live I become increasingly less Theist and more Christian. God is high above us, He cannot always be brought near, and so came down and dwelt among us. To me Christ is to the soul what a guide through a difficult country is to the traveller: he not merely supplies map and road-book but himself goes before and leaves his footprints for our guidance. What the sight of footprints on the snow of the Alps is to the lonely wanderer, that does the life of Christ become to me: no suffering or sorrow, no danger or peril, through which He has not passed before me, and I know that however narrow or difficult the path, there is an issue beyond. There are mountain passes so dangerous that it is only by placing one foot into the hand of the guide we can be safely carried through them; if the guide be trustworthy, if we know that he is familiar with the

road and has already led many in safety over it, we hesitate not to encounter the difficulties of the way. Christ is the leader ; trust Him as you trust an earthly guide, and He will lead you safely through all the perils of the way and through the last dark pass of the grave into the region of everlasting glory.

Rest in the Lord,—not idly, not insensibly, but lovingly and devotedly. Follow Christ with a calm yet brave and noble valour, ready to bear, ready to forbear, ready to endure all things, with the hope that maketh not ashamed. Rest in the Lord,—this is man's first, man's last, man's sweetest, truest rest, the rest of the sinner coming to the Saviour, the rest of the soul abiding in Him, the only real rest that can be found in earth or heaven,—rest in the Lord. May God grant to each and all of us to know this rest through faith in His only Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.

## II. THE CROWN.

"And cast their crowns before the throne." Revelation iv. 10.

It is seldom we venture to speak on any portion of the remarkable book from which our text is taken, because we are painfully conscious of the little there is in it that we can with any degree of certainty explain. Whether we regard it as a record of fulfilled or of unfulfilled prophecy, the gorgeous symbolism which clothes all its utterances is such that he who should succeed in comprehending its true intent and mighty sweep must be endowed with preter-

natural discernment. The Divine plan which the book sets forth is given only in outline such as an artist might make with charcoal—it lacks the filling up and the bright colours. Still there are here and there throughout the book fragments which, like stars shining out of the darkness, so far reveal themselves by the light of their own fire that we have no misgivings as to their meaning.

The passage chosen as our text is one of this class. We do not require any knowledge of either prophecy or mystery in order to understand its general scope and meaning. The door is opened in Heaven, and the apostle is invited to ascend and enter; in the group of scenes presented to his view are the four and twenty elders, who are doubtless the representatives of the Church, sitting on their thrones before the angust majesty of God, with crowns upon their heads; these crowns they lift from their brows, and falling down in adoration, cast them before the throne and give glory and honour and power to the Almighty. The action is one of profound import, as it teaches :—

I. *The great dignity which man has reached in Heaven.* The four and twenty elders represent all the members of the glorified Church, and therefore every member of that Church is crowned. "Thou hast redeemed us," say they, "out of every people and language and nation," so that they represent *all.* It may be that there are degrees in glory; it may be there are none; we do not attempt to solve the question; but if there are yet there is no degree below a crowned head in heaven. All the saints have their crowns; "a crown of life that fadeth not away" is

the very lowest portion of the very least saint admitted into glory.

The crown was a head ornament much worn in the East as a mark of dignity, dominion and power; it distinguished the chief rulers, civil and ecclesiastical. In the earliest times it consisted simply of a wreath of flowers or leaves, worn as a chaplet round the head, but later this gave way to crowns made of metal and ornamented with precious stones. The crown of the high priest was a golden diadem tied with a fillet of blue lace, and bearing the inscription "Holiness to the Lord." It appears from 1 Chron. xx. 2, that the crown of a King was of pure gold adorned with precious stones, and it is upon this last kind of crown that the imagery of the text is based. Those whom St. John saw in his sublime and seraphic vision "had on their heads crowns of gold,"—not of course metallic gold, for these, however pure the gold, however rich in diamonds or other precious stones, are mere toys of earth, and in reference to spiritual realities merely emblems of highest honour and splendour. The world has nothing higher to offer than a crown, and for that men have waded through seas of blood and hazarded their lives, and it is because men universally attach so much importance to a crown that it is employed to represent the renown to which the grace of God brings men in the heavenly life.

Scripture is very rich in the figures it employs to set forth the crown which the redeemed wear. In one place it is styled "a Crown of Righteousness." The crowns which earthly potentates wear are often associated with

deeds of blackest villainy, their history is a record of violence and wrong ; but the dignity of the redeemed in heaven is a righteous one, is in harmony with universal rectitude. Then in another place this crown is called "a Crown of Life." The crown given to the champion in the Grecian games soon withered, the woven garland soon dissolved to dust, the crowns of earthly monarchs are corruptible ; but the crown of the redeemed is imperishable, "incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

II. But the text leads us to enquire *how it is that the elders come to be crowned.*

They are crowned (1) *because they are all Kings by the grace of God ;* it was His sovereign will alone that set them apart, it was the Lord their heavenly Father who chose them from among the sons of men that they should be His sons and daughters. Grace came and enlightened their understanding, grace influenced their wills, grace changed their affections, grace kept them where it had brought them, so that they did not begin in the spirit to be afterwards made perfect in the flesh. The Spirit of God wrought in them mightily, making them diligent in every good word and work. Grace was the Alpha and the Omega, so that there is not a King in heaven that has a crown on any terms than this,—the sovereign Grace of God.

Then they are crowned (2) *because they are Kings by hereditary descent* ; they have been "begotten again," as the Apostle expresses it, "unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead." There are in heaven none but God's sons ; the angels it is true are

there, and they are His ministering servants, but there are none of the human race that are merely servants, they are all sons ; some were prodigal sons, some at times were influenced by the temper of the elder brother in the parable, but they are all sons and are there because they are sons. They have come to their crown by inheritance just as much as any hereditary prince enthroned in the royal splendour of this world ; there is born in the image of God's son a new peculiar race, with heaven entailed upon them, an entail which hell can never bar.

Then they are crowned (3) *because they are Kings by right of conquest and of victory*. A crown should signify, as it did in the olden time, successful struggling, battling and contending ; the first crowns ever worn were probably given to those who had proved themselves strongest and had fought best in the day of battle. We have said that the crowns of heaven are all the gifts of grace, and yet at the same time it is true that those who have the crowns have fought for them. " These are they that came out of great tribulation " ; it was not that tribulation *procured* the crown, but it seems to be a rule of God's Church on earth that those of His servants who are to be rewarded shall work, and those who are to be crowned shall fight. It is by God's grace that we shall get to heaven, but we must go on our pilgrimage to arrive there. There is no chariot to carry us all along the road ; we must often tramp with sore and bleeding feet and aching limbs ; we must climb the Hill Difficulty, and go down into the Valley of Humiliation. John Bunyan's picture of the bright spirits on the top of the palace who sang " Come

in ! Come in ! Eternal glory thou shalt win !" would not have been complete if he had not pictured the armed men at the bottom of the stairs who stood there to keep back any who sought to enter the house,—would not have been complete without the description of the man of a grave countenance, the man with the ink-horn to take the name of him that should enter therein, to whom the valiant man said " Set down my name, Sir," and when this had been done drew his sword and fought desperately until he seemed to die, but at last he took his place on the top of the palace, for he had won the day :—" We must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God." They are Kings because they have fought with sin and with temptations ; they are not crowned without having contended for the victory. Some have resisted even " unto blood, striving against sin," and through sufferings that cannot be told have entered into rest.

But they are crowned also (4) *because of the nobility of their nature.* If honours were fairly distributed amongst men we should not so often see the meanest spirit in the loftiest place ; this is ever one of the hard things of this life. Of this the wise man complained (Eccles. x. 7) that he had seen servants on horseback and masters walking in the mire ; folly in great dignity and wisdom in low place ; the mean spirits of the world clothed in scarlet and the great spirits in rags ; the men that deserved ill clothed in scarlet and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day, and the men that deserved well lying at the gate, the dogs licking their sores. Now it is not so in heaven ; there nobility is given to the noble, and to the upright in heart the

reward of the righteous. The pure in heart see God, and the undefiled in the way inherit the blessing.

Oh, how bright are those spirits that are crowned! They are without fault before the throne! In the providences of life they learnt what God meant to teach them, how to serve Him, how to turn everything to His glory, and now they are lifted up above the world and have carried with them into another state, a state beautified with all the holiness of God, the spirit that was in them here. They have been made glorious by the work of the Spirit of God within them, they are clothed with honour and majesty not only outwardly but also inwardly, all things are theirs, and they are rich in all the intensity of bliss.

Yes, dear friends, and you, if you believe in Jesus, will soon sit with Him and be crowned. Be it yours to live before the throne of God in spirit every day, and then when the Lord shall come you will in body as well as in spirit sit there raised from the dead and made perfect for ever, enjoying the fulness of happiness of Kings and Priests unto God. Can you conceive it? Shall you indeed wear a crown? Can it be that you, now perhaps despised and neglected of men, shall be made a King? Will the angels be courtiers while you, raised and changed, shall sit as a King in the midst of the courts of Heaven, there to abide for ever? It will be even so. If the head aches this morning, let the reflection that it will soon be crowned console you; if you have had much to worry you through the week, let the sweet thought that you will soon be where not a wave of trouble shall ever cross your peaceful breast be a rich consolation to you. There is a throne in Heaven that

no one can occupy but you ; there is a crown in Heaven that no head can wear but yours ; there is a part in the eternal chorus of thanksgiving and praise that no voice can ever compass but yours ; there is a glory to God that will be wanting if you are not there to render it ; there is a part of infinite majesty and glory that will never be reflected if you are not there to reflect it. O seek the rights of conquest as warrior, the rights of sonship as a child of God, and then the rights of possession will be inviolable, for in these things you have all that goes to constitute an unassailable right to the crown.

III. Further, the text teaches us *the use to which the crown is devoted.* Though they all have crowns they all cast them before the throne of the Lamb. Why do they do so ? Several reasons may very properly be assigned.

(1.) They do it *under the influence of solemn reverence.* Elevated to those sacred heights they see more of God than we do, and are thrilled with admiration and filled with awe. We know enough of God now to say, "Not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy and Thy truth's sake"; but where God more gloriously reveals Himself, where His attributes are more clearly seen, no doubt there are intenser reverence and more overwhelming emotion, so that the soul of its own spontaneity pays all the homage that it can before the throne of God. Think you that you could sit with crowned head in the presence of the King of Kings ? When you see the head that once was crowned with thorns adorned with a royal diadem you will require no persuasion to lead you to cast your crown at His feet. Reverence will fill you with a feeling

of lowest self-abasement, and with a sacred passion that cannot be restrained you will join with all the ransomed throng "and crown Him Lord of all."

(2.) Then these crowns are cast before the throne *under the influence of an intense affection*. There is not one spirit in all that countless throng whose heart does not bound with warmest love to Christ; they love their Lord, and loving Him they will do anything to adore Him, and their choicest trophy, their most cherished treasure, they fling at His feet. Here our love is distracted and divided, our hearts are stolen away by earthly objects, but there love to God is without a flaw, and they cast everything down before Him, they lay their crowns at His feet.

(3.) Further, they cast their crowns before the throne *because of their profound gratitude*. They bless God that they are where they are and what they are; they trace all their joy and all their happiness to that one infinite source of good. There is not a single sparkle of any precious gem in their coronet but they trace the flashing gleam to the sovereign grace of God, and gratitude constrains them to lay their crowns at the feet of Him from whom those crowns came.

(4). Finally, they cast their crowns at His feet *to indicate His wide dominion, His universal sway*. Banished to the isle of Patmos, John might find it hard to realise the glory and universality of Christ's dominion; but this vision would revive his dying hope, for in it he saw a prophecy of what was yet certainly to come to pass, and the fulfilment is even now being worked out. The cross will find its counterpart in the crown; Jesus will yet make His

foes His footstool. It may be that if for a moment the crust that conceals the seething fires of the volcano beneath you be broken you will hear moanings and mutterings, hissings and screechings, that suggest fearlessness of man and defiance of God ; but the volcano will become extinct, the Cross must prevail. In spite of many contrary seemings the eye of faith can see many glimpses of morning glory,—the Lord Jesus is coming in His Kingdom. Among the islands of the Pacific whole groups are already Christianised ; in Melanesia the field is every day being extended ; even the aborigines of Australia, as if to prove that no race or tribe is too low for the power of Christ to reach them, have come under the influence of the Gospel ; Palestine is studded with mission churches and schools ; the Western Coast of this dark continent has stations stretching from Senegal to the Gaboon ; nearly the whole of its southern border is already Christian, and by the road which Livingstone travelled to the interior the missionary is pushing his way into the heart of its unknown regions ; in Japan fruit has already been gathered ; China, too, has opened its gates, and hoary superstitions are trembling throughout the whole of India. Max Müller only recently said, "From what I know of the Hindoos they seem to me riper for Christianity than any nation that ever accepted the Gospel." Yes, the Lord is coming,

> The smitten earth already reels,
> And not far off we seem to hear
> The thunder of His chariot wheels.

He who testifieth these things saith, "Surely I come

quickly, and My reward is with Me to give unto every man according as his work shall be."

They cast their crowns before the throne. How many of us are on the way to Heaven? How many of us have already learnt to cast our crowns at the Saviour's feet? This is the test by which we may know our state before God, for no man ever goes to Heaven to learn for the first time heavenly things; we must be scholars in Christ's school here or we cannot be taken into the college above. If you should walk into some great Cathedral where they were singing a grand anthem and were to ask to be allowed to sing in the choir, they would enquire if you had ever learnt the music and would refuse your request unless you had, and how then can you expect that untrained voices will be admitted into the choir above? If you refuse Christ in this life you will be in no state to crown Him hereafter. O may every one of us see Him crowned with thorns and trust Him here and now, so shall we come to see Him crowned with a royal diadem, be crowned with Him, and with the multitude that no man can number cast our crowns before the throne. May the Lord grant it for His name's sake.

# ADDENDUM.

The Congregational Year Book after referring to the circumstances of Mr. Hoyle's early life, his successful ministry, and his sudden death by a carriage accident four days after he had preached the second of the foregoing sermons, a little more than twenty months after his arrival in Cape Town from Yeovil, says :—

Thus early as it seems to us—at the close of his forty-eighth year—was this devoted minister taken from the service of the Church on earth. Mr. Hoyle was one of those men whose disposition leads them to fix their attention on the practical side of every-day life, a man of quick action, of energy and constant diligence. With him if a thing had to be done "'twere well it were done quickly." He was one who lived in and for the Ministry he had undertaken. The Church over which he presided was the centre of his interest. With constant watchfulness he sought out those who attended its services and strove to make himself the friend of each. Especially was he solicitous to win the interest and regard of the young, and while desirous of being well known in the homes of all his flock he was more diligent in visiting those who belonged to the working class or who were in humble circumstances. In the cultivation from house to house of such influence he was assiduous and unremitting. To him the Church was a home, its services the gatherings of the

family, and no words were more often on his lips when receiving new members into its communion than those which referred to it as a spiritual home.

He was keenly sensitive to the emotional atmosphere around him, largely dependent on sympathy and the reciprocation of his feelings by those with whom he had intimately to do. Hence he was always anxious to avoid anything which seemed likely to lead to friction, and any strong expression of difference of opinion on the part of those with whom he had to deal he always seemed to deprecate. It was doubtless the emotional side of his nature that gave the charm which his sermons had for most of his hearers. The earnest appeal to feelings and experience common to both preacher and listener coupled with the frequent illustrations with which his sermons were interpersed fixed the interest and touched the hearts of men and women who widely differed in intellectual power and training.

The removal of such a Pastor of the Church in what seemed the maturity of his powers just at the time when, in a new country, he was assuming a position for which he appeared well suited, and which had every promise of being one of great usefulness for many years, is one of those mysteries of the Divine working before which there is for us but silence and the unspoken prayer,

Speak, thou availing Christ! and fill this pause.

When on the following Sunday his funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. William Thompson from the text "And there shall be no night there," those who had heard Mr. Hoyle's sermon of the previous Sunday could

not but recall how its subject had been the casting of the crown before the throne. In that sermon he had taught them that in the providence of life they learnt what God meant to teach them, how to serve Him, how to turn everything to His glory. He had dwelt on how the crowns in heaven were cast before the throne under the influence of solemn reverence and intense affection, and on the heightened powers and possibilities of "those sacred heights." In a wide survey of the "glimpses of the morning glory" he had sought to set forth how the Lord Jesus is coming in His kingdom. With earnest appeal to others he had said "We must be scholars in Christ's school here, or else we cannot be taken into His college above." Friends told one another how, at the close of his last Sabbath, he had complained to his wife of great weariness and said, "I feel as if it will be a long time before I shall preach again." Perhaps all this that seemed so like premonition was because even then the command had gone forth that he should lay down the cross and take the crown of life which he would cast before the throne. Perhaps all unconsciously to him as to his people then it was the eager straining forward of the spirit to catch a glimpse of the celestial city, so near the gates of which though all unwittingly, he was then standing.

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